

MARY'S FIRSTBORN, GOD'S ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON

In the first few centuries after Christ, the Church in the Roman Empire became somewhat organized and was defined and controlled by Rome and Roman thinking. Christianity in the Roman Empire became increasingly idolatrous and infiltrated with pagan ideas and practices. Whereas Christianity in the regions east of the Euphrates River, such as the Persian Empire, as well as some eastern parts of the Roman Empire, retained a lot of the truth of God.

Throughout the history of the Christian church it seems that there has always been what I would call pockets of truth. Ever since its demise in the first century as recorded in the Second Epistle of Timothy, there have been brief moments and periods of time where men who knew the truth or caught glimpses of the truth of God's Word endeavored to return those truths to the forefront of Church thinking. As these truths grew in popularity they would cause great controversy in the organized church, which had moved away from the truth of God. This led to the convening of great ecumenical councils of Bishops and Elders from around the empires of the world to debate and settle these disputes. Unfortunately at most of these councils the truth of God was the loser.

In 325 A.D. a council was convened in Nicaea to settle the Arian controversy. Arius was presbyter to Alexander the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt. Arius and Alexander were at enmity regarding the divinity of Christ. Arius believed and taught that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and not God and that they were not one in the same person and that to teach this was a destructive heresy. Alexander strongly disagreed. Many of the bishops in eastern parts of the Roman Empire agreed with Arius and supported him. The Bishops in the West, in most of the Roman Empire, condemned Arius and his teaching and those who supported him. A council was convened in Nicaea to debate, discuss and vote on the issue. The council consisted of bishops primarily from the west. Political pressure was brought to bear on the council by Constantine who wished to have the matter settled and an end brought to the controversy that raged in his kingdom. Consequently the Nicene Creed was adopted, setting forth the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as being one in the same person and the doctrine of the Trinity was adopted by the Church. Jesus Christ was elected as God when he never even ran for the office, and the truth of God lost the election.

Whenever you tell a lie, you have to continue to fabricate lies in order to support and substantiate the original lie that you told. It then just goes on and on and on. Since Jesus Christ was voted as being God, now more lies and distortions would have to be invented in order to substantiate that position. Since Jesus Christ was God, that must make Mary the Mother of God.

In 431 A.D. another council was convened in the city of Ephesus to settle the Nestorian controversy. Nestorius, a graduate of the school at Antioch, was the chaplain to the emperor in Constantinople. He believed and taught that Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ but definitely not the mother of God. Nestorius' teaching was believed and supported by Christendom east of the Euphrates River and in eastern parts of the Roman Empire.

Cyril, who was the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt believed and taught that Mary was *theotokos*, the "God-bearer" or mother of God. Cyril had been born into a non-Christian family. He did not become a Christian until later in his life. During his formative years he believed in and practiced Egyptian paganism. He believed in Isis, Osiris, Horus and other Egyptian deities. It is obvious that this affected him greatly after becoming a Christian. Since his former gods and goddesses had mothers, and since Jesus Christ had been voted as being God a century before, then surely Mary must be the Mother of God. This doctrine gained support from many of the converted pagans in the church since it fit with what they had previously believed and practiced.

Because of the great controversy this was causing in the Empire, a general council of all bishops was called to meet in Ephesus in 431 A.D. The Bishops from around the Roman Empire were able to conveniently travel to the council by ship. The bishops from the east had to come by far more difficult and time consuming land routes. Consequently many of the eastern bishops arrived late to the council by which time a vote had already been taken and Mary was elevated from being the "handmaid of the Lord," according to Luke 1:38, to the un-Biblical position of "Mother of God." Nestorius, his teaching and those who supported him were condemned, and again the truth of God lost in the election.

Many of these early doctrines of the Roman Church have obvious roots in Egyptian and Babylonian mythology and

paganism. The Egyptian deity Isis had a divine son named Horus. Isis then remained a virgin the rest of her life. Now since Jesus has been voted to be God, and Mary has been voted to being the Mother of God, then Mary, like Isis, must also have remained a virgin for the rest of her life after Jesus Christ was born. Subsequently, she could not have had any other children, which means that Jesus Christ did not have any brothers or sisters. All of these doctrines and theologies originated in Rome and have been carried around the world by the Roman Church.

Even after the great period of Reformation between the thirteen and fifteen hundreds, many of these doctrines were carried over into Protestant thinking because the Reformers were they themselves priests of the Roman Church. Though they tried to Reform Church doctrine and practices, many of the research tools and texts and other resources available to them at that time in history were limited and many times corrupted by Roman theology.

To say that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus Christ and that she never bore any other children is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. To even say that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born is contrary to the Bible, for the angel of the Lord had told Joseph "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife" (Matthew 1:20). "Then," it says, "Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife" (Matthew 1:24). He took her as he should, as his wife. Every Biblical record states that they were already married when you understand the Eastern custom of espousement. To take unto himself his wife means he lived with her as a husband and wife should. He had sexual relations with her. They consummated their union, legally and physically. Her virginity now was not an issue because she was already pregnant by God. She was a virgin at the time of conception not at the time of Jesus' birth.

There are those who teach that Joseph was an older man and that the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ mentioned in the Bible were Joseph's by a former marriage or that they were Jesus' cousins. This has no Biblical basis or substantiation. The word "brother" or "brethren" used in the Bible is the Greek word *adelphos*. It is only used in one of four ways in the Bible - 1. As children of the same parent or parents. 2. As descendants of the same common stock. (i.e. Abraham as forefather: Acts 7:23,25) 3. As fellow men. (Matthew 7:3-5; 18:15). 4. As spiritual children. (Acts 9:17; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11).

In the Bible where the brethren of Jesus Christ are mentioned, only the usage of children of the same parents can be applied. Matthew 12:46-50; 13:55-58; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21; John 7:3-5; Acts 1:14; I Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 1:9

The Roman Catholic Prelate Jerome theorized that these brothers and sisters were Jesus' cousins. This too is erroneous. Had they been cousins or family relations other than brothers and sisters, the Greek word *sungenes*, which is translated "kinsman," "kinsfolk," "kin" or "cousin" would have been used instead of *adelphos*.

Mark 6:4; Luke 1:36,58; 2:44; 14:12; 21:16; John 18:26; Acts 10:24; Romans 9:3; 16:7,11,21

We know from God's Word that Jesus had four brothers - James, Joses, Simon, and Judas; and that he had at least three sisters according to the record of Matthew 13:55,56. He was Mary's firstborn not her only born. The word "firstborn" axiomatically implies that there was a "second-born" or "later-born" children. The word "firstborn" is the Greek word *prototokos* which is easily defined and understood from looking at all of its Biblical usages. Matthew 1:25; Luke 2:7; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15,18; Hebrews 1:6; 11:28; 12:23; Revelation 1:5

While Jesus Christ was Mary's firstborn, he was God's only begotten Son. The phrase "only-born" or "only begotten" is the Greek word *monogenes*, whose meaning is again clearly seen from its Biblical occurrences. Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; Hebrews 11:17; I John 4:9